

programs, and I urge all Americans to reaffirm their devotion to the fundamental principles of religious freedom and religious tolerance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 6863 of January 30, 1996**

**National African American History Month, 1996**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

Today's schoolchildren are fortunate to grow up in classrooms where they are taught to appreciate all of the many heroes of American history. While previous generations read textbooks that told only part of our Nation's story, materials have been developed in recent years that give our students a fuller picture—textured and deepened by new characters and themes. African American History Month provides a special opportunity for teachers and schools to celebrate this ongoing process and to focus on the many African Americans whose lives have shaped our common experience.

This year, our observance emphasizes black women and the strides made to bring their achievements to the fore. From Sojourner Truth's sermons, to Mary McLeod Bethune's speeches, to the contemporary novels of Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, the voices of African American women have called attention to the twin burdens of racism and sexism and have invited listeners to discover the richness of traditions kept alive in back kitchens and workrooms. In churches and communities, and more recently in universities and statehouses across America, these women have fought extraordinary battles for social, economic, and political empowerment.

Barbara Jordan once wrote,

'We the people'; it is a very eloquent beginning. But when the Constitution of the United States was completed on the seventeenth of September, 1787, I was not included in that 'We the people.' .....

As we mourn the loss of this great American, let us honor her by seeking to further the progress made since those early days toward true equality and inclusion. During African American History Month and throughout the year, we must embrace the diverse strands of our story so that all children can see themselves in our Nation's past and know that they have a role to play in seizing the future's countless opportunities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 1996, as National African American History Month. I call upon Government officials, educators in schools, colleges, universities, and li-

braries, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that raise awareness of African American history and invite further inquiry into this area of study.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 6864 of February 1, 1996**

**American Heart Month, 1996**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

There are few among us whose lives have not been touched by the devastating effects of heart disease. Cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease and stroke, takes one million of our citizens each year, and heart disease remains the single leading cause of death in this country. Millions of Americans suffer from high blood pressure, and millions more have high levels of blood cholesterol. Studies also show sharp increases in the number of people who are overweight and physically inactive.

It is, however, encouraging that public health efforts are raising awareness of the risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Though some—family history and age—are inescapable, the risks posed by high blood pressure and high cholesterol, lack of exercise, smoking, diabetes, and obesity can be greatly reduced through modifications to personal behavior. Advances in research have helped us to gain a better understanding of heart disease, provided new diagnostic methods, and helped develop treatments that save lives and vastly improve the outlook for stricken patients.

We can be proud that the Federal Government has contributed to the fight against heart disease by supporting the efforts of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, and by promoting new dietary and health guidelines. The American Heart Association, through research, education programs, and the work of its vital network of volunteers, has also played a crucial role.

As we observe American Heart Month, let us build on our achievements by learning more about the causes of heart disease and by making the changes we can to improve our cardiovascular health. Recognizing that even small adjustments to diet and exercise habits can yield significant benefits, we can help those who already suffer from heart disease and encourage those who are taking their first steps toward better, healthier lives.

In recognition of the need for all Americans to become involved in the work to stop heart disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 169b), has requested that